



For Immediate Release
February 23, 2007

Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453

DCR ANNOUNCES NEW CRITERIA FOR OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE USE IN STATE PARKS

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced a new policy on Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on DCR properties. DCR manages the Massachusetts State Parks, including the seven state forests where the use of OHVs, including all-terrain vehicles and off-road motorcycles, is legally permitted.

The policy consists of a new set of criteria that will be used to evaluate the appropriateness of a given property for motorized recreation. At its February 2 meeting, DCR's oversight board, the Stewardship Council, approved the new policy and added a requirement that the agency also develop a plan within the next six months to address enforcement issues.

"We are very pleased that the Council has added their voice to the many organizations, hundreds of individuals, and dozens of agency staff who have been working on the challenge of motorized trail recreation in Massachusetts," said DCR Acting Commissioner Priscilla Geigis. "This policy will greatly aid DCR in protecting environmentally sensitive landscapes and guiding a popular form of outdoor recreation."

The criteria were developed over the course of a year by DCR and the OHV Working Group, an advisory council consisting of trail users, environmental scientists, state and federal land management agencies, and other concerned citizens. Other participants in the process included The Nature Conservancy and the New England Trail Riders Association. Drafts of the criteria were presented at public meetings across the Commonwealth in February and March of 2006, and more than 130 written comments were received during the public comment period.

DCR currently maintains approximately 200 miles of motorized recreation trails in seven Massachusetts state forests. The new criteria provide a consistent framework for evaluating these and other locations for motorized recreation. The criteria were designed to ensure, among other things, the protection of natural resources (such as wetlands, water supply areas, wildlife habitat and forest reserves), proper coordination with local communities, and public safety.

DCR will work with law enforcement agencies and various stakeholders on the enforcement plan, which will be presented to the Stewardship Council for a vote by early August. Updates on the development of the plan will be posted on DCR's website, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr> as it progresses.

Detailed information on the siting criteria can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/orv.htm>. For more information, contact DCR at 617-626-4973 or mass.parks@state.ma.us.

###

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Timothy P. Murray
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Priscilla E. Geigis, Acting Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation